

A Day to Remember by Andy Carver

It didn't seem like a big thing to do, just be there when the Timon's Ministrie's opened and help the needy people from 10 am until 2 pm. In fact, I really didn't know what to do. I felt more like an observer than a worker. Mary H. ran the place. She is a beautiful, compassionate minister's wife who radiates warmth, friendliness and love. She also heads the volunteer program. I was there for the first time and really wanted to help. During a previous short orientation, I learned that assistance was given to the needy through an in-house food bank, a hot lunch served to anyone who was hungry, clean clothing, hot showers, laundry facilities and rent and utility assistance. Wow! No one that works there gets paid. They volunteer because something inside of them needs to burst out and help people.

The first couple arrived before we were open. They looked in the window and waited patiently for us to unlock the door. They claimed to be married. Their clothing was very dirty and the woman's slacks were badly stained. I learned later that they lived in the bushes in the Flour Bluff community. When we opened the doors, the woman came in and excitedly claimed to have won \$50 in a bingo game the day before. They were there for the noon meal. Mary greeted the two as if they were old friends of hers and invited the woman to pick out some clothing from the clothes pantry, take a nice hot shower and dispose of her old stained clothing. The suggestion was quickly accepted and within minutes a transformation took place. Even though she did not wash her hair, she looked much better, smelled better and, I am sure, felt better. As I set folding chairs around the lunch tables, the woman and her husband quickly assisted.

The next person came in for food from the food pantry. She said that they were staying in a low cost local motel and had lost all of their food to thieves while camping on the beach. They had no cooking facilities so we filled her food sacks with items that could be eaten directly from the can. We filled two big bags for the five people in her family. We do not want people to be hungry.

Business picked up as volunteers returned from the downtown kitchen of Metro Ministries with the hot lunch meal. Meat, pasta, vegetables, bread and lemonaid were served from the steam table. Oreo cookies and left over birthday cake provided a sweet dessert. Approximately 40 people ate lunch. There was plenty of food and no one left the premises hungry. Chalk up another successful day for the volunteers.

Mary H. talked to a lady who was about to be evicted because of failure to pay rent. I don't know why she was so far behind or what Mary did to help her but the woman left with her head up, smiling and seemingly grateful for the advice and assistance she received.

And the day progressed. More food bags were given out. More clothing was donated to needy families. Finally, the day ended. My thoughts go out to the

persons that I met today. My prayers are indeed with them that they may find peace, work, food and happiness. My thanks go out to the many churches in our city that help the Timon's Ministrie's with volunteers that pick up the hot food from Metro Ministries, the persons that come in to serve the food and the cleaner-uppers who wash the pans, sweep and mop the floors and get ready for the next day. God bless you all. The Lord loves you.